

A HISTORY  
OF  
TEXAS and TEXANS

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BY  
FRANK W. JOHNSON  
A LEADER IN THE TEXAS REVOLUTION

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To which are added Historical, Statistical and Descriptive Matter pertaining  
to the important Local Divisions of the State, and biographical ac-  
counts of the Leaders and Representative Men of the State  
in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activities.

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1912 was elected for the full term of six years, running from January 1, 1913. Mr. Williams served a number of terms by appointment from the governor as judge of the District Court, and it is said that no other lawyer was more frequently called from practice for this special service than Mr. Williams. He has been treasurer of the Texas State Bar Association since 1892. He is past master of Masonic lodge, past high priest of the Royal Arch chapter, and a member of the Knights Templar and of Hella Temple of the Mystic Shrine in Dallas. His church is the Christian. Mr. Williams is a man of broad experience and culture, and has occasionally turned for diversion to the lighter field of literature, and has written several articles and stories which have been accepted by the eastern press. At Lockhart, Texas, on December 5, 1876, Mr. Williams married Miss Jettie Pearson, a daughter of Clement C. Pearson, of Illinois. Mrs. Williams was a schoolmate of her husband in Illinois. Their home is at 118 West Ninth Street in Austin.

HON. SIDNEY P. SKINNER. In San Antonio, which has been his home since 1909, Mr. Skinner is probably best known as a banker, and a progressive and capable business man and citizen. For many years Mr. Skinner was an active member of the Texas bar, practicing at Waxahachie, and a few years ago gained a statewide reputation for his work as a legislator.

Born at Troy, in Drew County, Arkansas, in 1863, Sidney P. Skinner is the son of Larkin and Serepta (Pittman) Skinner. As he was brought to Texas when an infant, he is practically a lifelong resident of the state. The family settled in Denton County, later moving to Hill County, where Mr. Skinner was reared. He gained his literary education in one of the leading colleges of the state, graduating from Baylor University at Waco in 1884. His law studies were pursued at Waxahachie in Ellis County, and with his admission to the bar in 1887 he soon took up active practice and quickly established a reputation for successful work. He was elected city attorney of Waxahachie, and served one term in the office of county superintendent of schools for Ellis County, an administration which did much to promote educational standards in that county.

His public record will longest be remembered for his prominence during four years as state senator, beginning in 1905. He was sent to the Senate from Ellis County, and served with distinction in the Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth sessions. In the Thirtieth Session he was unanimously elected president pro tem. of the Senate. His efforts were directed more toward preventing the enactment of useless and futile laws than the enactment of new ones, but there were a number of important measures passed in which his efforts and influence were effective. Mr. Skinner is credited as being chiefly responsible for the passage of the anti-bucket shop law in the Senate, and also for the enactment of the measure requiring outside insurance companies among other things to comply with certain requirements imposed upon home companies, as to investments in Texas securities. For his stanch adherence to the principles in which he believed and for his efforts in promoting legislation such as would in his opinion be of real benefit to the people, Mr. Skinner won a warm place in the confidence of the thinking, high-minded members of the Legislature and of the citizens of the state at large.

A large practice as a lawyer kept Mr. Skinner busy at Waxahachie until 1909, when he moved his home to San Antonio, and has since discontinued the practice of law. He is engaged in the live stock and ranching business and is now president of the Citizens Bank and Trust Company. This progressive institution was organized by him and his associates and began business in February, 1913.

Mr. Skinner affiliates with the Masonic fraternity, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the Knights of Pythias. In 1891 he married Miss Willia Getzendaner, daughter of the late Capt. W. H. Getzendaner, one of the historic characters of Ellis County and a man of statewide prominence. Mrs. Skinner was educated at Staunton, Virginia, under Mrs. J. E. B. Stuart, one of the South's most famous women. Whatever success has attended the efforts of Mr. Skinner, he attributes in great part to the co-operation and influence of his wife.

JOHN E. RYLEE, a prominent young lawyer at Austin, and representing some fine old pioneer stock in North Texas, has rapidly gained an enviable reputation in professional circles at the capital city and in the first four years of their professional work few lawyers go so far and show such solid qualifications for their work.

Just across the Brazos River from Granbury there still stands an old stone house in which both John E. Rylee and his father, Jeff D. Rylee, came into the world. Jeff D. Rylee is a son of the late Y. J. Rylee, who was born in Georgia and came to Texas and settled in Hood County long before the war. For years he lived close to the frontier. Jeff D. Rylee has long been connected with farming and stock raising, and for several years past has practiced veterinary surgery at Granbury. The mother of the Austin lawyer is Sadie Elizabeth (McDonald) Rylee, who was born at her father's home situated on the line between Hood and Somerville counties. The McDonalds were among the first to people that section of Texas, and for years endured the dangers and horrors of Indian raids, and Mrs. Rylee recalls many thrilling incidents that came under her personal observation and knowledge. One of her brothers, W. A. J., better known as Jack, McDonald, who now lives in Oklahoma, is well remembered as one of the participants in the warfare against the Indians, and is one of the last, perhaps, survivors of the border battle, frequently mentioned in Texas annals, the Star Hollow Indian fight, which occurred near the McDonald homestead.

Born near Granbury, in Hood County, January 17, 1886, John E. Rylee received a common school education, attended Granbury College, and was also a student in the noted old Add-Ran College at Thorp Springs, and still unsatisfied as to equipment, he next entered the University of Texas. Throughout his higher education John E. Rylee earned the money necessary to defray his expenses, and knows what it is to live on a basis of simplest economy, and still be self respecting and efficient. While studying law at the University of Texas he was chief examining clerk in the comptroller's department at the capitol, and made a commendable record at both ends of the line.

Since leaving the law department in 1912, Mr. Rylee has been devoting his complete energies to private practice, and has handled a large amount of both civil and criminal business in the state courts and the Federal district courts. He is exceedingly painstaking as a lawyer, careful of the interests of his clients, and brings to bear on his cases a trained mind and one thoroughly prepared for every contingency. He has surrounded himself with a well equipped library, all usable and workable volumes, consisting of the best standards and the latest works on all the varied phases of the law. Almost unaided and alone he has reached a high position as a lawyer in the state capital where there are many brilliant members of the bar, with long standing reputations. He has a fine personality, being kindly, courteous, genial and optimistic, and those who have observed him closely say that his future is assured.

Since his youth he has taken much interest in public affairs, and politics, and has ability as a debater and public speaker, shown both in court